

I have learned quite a bit since Governor Fletcher and Lt. Governor Pence appointed me Kentucky's Director of Homeland Security.

One thing I have learned is that it isn't the speaker who is the most comical or the most intellectually stimulating who receives the affection of his audience, but it is usually the speaker who is the briefest. Let me tell you, I intend to earn your affection.

There is not a state in the country which understands the importance of ensuring that law enforcement officers have the tools they need to keep people safe more than Kentucky. This is a commitment on the part of so many; the Fletcher-Pence administration and many administrations before it, the Kentucky General Assembly, but most of all the folks here at the Department of Criminal Justice Training. They know, and now you do, that the latest technology and more resources are no substitute for the knowledge that can be imparted through rigorous and continual training and exercises. This philosophy executed by DOCJT under the leadership of Commissioner John Bizzack, has allowed Kentucky to serve as a national leader in prevention initiatives and all Kentuckians owe them a debt of gratitude for their work.

I appreciate the invitation to say a few words this morning at what is an important recognition not only of the sacrifice of you and your loved ones have made over the past 16 weeks, but also a recognition of the fact that as thousands of Kentuckians are

defending freedom abroad, you and your colleagues across the state are doing the same thing everyday right here in Kentucky.

Jesse Stuart, the great writer from my native northeast Kentucky, once wrote, “If these United States were a body, Kentucky would be its heart.” At the time Stuart wrote that phrase, he was using it to describe his love for Kentucky. I see the phrase, however, as a metaphor for the vital role that the Commonwealth plays in our nation’s commercial infrastructure.

Kentucky is the heart of the United States. 50% of all goods sold on the eastern seaboard pass over the roads you will now ensure are safe for your family and mine to travel. 15% of the nation’s electricity is generated here. The world’s largest shipper sends virtually every package in the eastern United States to Kentucky before it is shipped elsewhere. If you fly Delta and wish to avoid Atlanta, and I suggest you do, then you will have to travel through the largest Delta passenger hub, which is right here in Kentucky. All of these reasons are why Jesse Stuart is right in calling Kentucky the heart of our nation.

Because Kentucky provides the Nation’s pulse, it is the reason we have to incorporate the effort to deter, detect, mitigate, and prepare to respond to acts of terrorism into the mindset of every law enforcement officer in Kentucky.

Every community, every family, and every first responder in Kentucky must work to ensure Kentucky is Ready and Prepared.

DOCJT is doing that now through a partnership with the Kentucky Sheriff's Association, the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police, KLC, KACO and our office to ensure Kentucky communities, large and small, know what to look for and how to properly prepare their critical infrastructure for acts of terrorism.

Assessments are being taken of 60 Kentucky communities by trained professionals to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the community with regards to security. This program is going to make your jobs easier because once these communities have taken the appropriate measures to ready themselves, they will have mitigated the causes and effects of a hostile event.

For those spouses, children, and friends in the room who may not wear a uniform, I have a message for you as well. You have a personal responsibility to the Commonwealth and her security as well. You may have asked about ways to get involved and may or may not have succeeded, but that is about to change. Governor Fletcher is about to unveil a program called Governor's Corps that is aimed specifically at preparing Kentucky's families. It is going to show you and your loved ones some of the basic steps that we all can take to ready ourselves in the case of some hostile event. Once we all recognize our duty to this cause, Kentucky will be all the better for it.

Whether it is your efforts in the law enforcement community or working with your family to form a plan of action in case of an emergency, coordination must occur for us to be successful. Communication is imperative in funneling our collective energies to secure our Commonwealth's safety; or as my mother would put it, "to make sure that we are all singing off the same page of the hymnal." Preparedness is a culture which is multi-dimensional, multi-agency, and must involve communication and partnerships with the federal, state, and local levels of government. It is both your job and mine to foster these partnerships, so that we can solidify the foundation that is Kentucky's security.

Former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge has said that we must challenge each other intellectually and emotionally to place Homeland Security at the tops of Kentuckians' radar screen. I have taken a few moments to engage your minds, now I wish to engage your hearts.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that Americans deserved the right to have freedom from fear. I lived in New York in 2001 and I can tell you that after the attack on our country, none of us enjoyed that freedom. Every time we rode in a subway car, every time I departed New York by plane, every time I heard a loud noise on the streets, New Yorkers' were struck with fear. My lasting memory of the three years I spent in New York will always be waking up to the sound of bagpipes playing on the 6 am news, reporting on the funeral of another first responder who passed on that day.

This memory is the reason I asked to become Director of Homeland Security. It is the reason President Bush has called protecting our communities, and families, and first responders in the post 9-11 world ‘the calling of our times.’

It is the calling of our times. And I am proud to be here with you today to recognize you for answering the call and ensuring that Kentucky is, Ready and Prepared.